

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9716
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 3482

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PINT, PGOV, CI, PE
SUBJECT NEW PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR TO CHILE: GENERAL GUILLERMO
ARBULU GALLIANI

1. GENERA ARBULU, THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER MINISTER
OF WAR AND COMMANDING GENERAL OF THE ARMY, IS LEAVING
APRIL 30 FOR SANTIAGO TO TAKE UP HIS NEW DUTIES. ONE
OF THE GENRAL'S TRUSTED STAFF AIDES, A LT.COL. FERNANDEZ,
IS REPORTEDLY ALREADY IN CHILE PREPARING THE WAY.

2. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, TH E IDEA OF SENDING ARBULU
TO CHILE ORIGINATED WITH PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ.
THE LATTER REPORTEDLY EXPLAINED TO HIS CONFIDANTES THAT
THE CAUSE OF PEACE WOULD BE SERVED AS THE CRTICIAL YEAR
OF 1979 APPROACHES BY HAVING AN AUTHENTIC AND PRESTI-
GIOUS SPOKESMAN OF THE PERUVIAN ARMY IN SANTIAGO TO
TREAT ON TERMS OF EQUALITY WITH THE CHILEAN GENERALS.
SOME SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT THE REAL INTEREST IS IN THE
REMOVAL OF A PUTATIVE RIVAL FOR POWER. (THERE WERE EVEN
RUMORS LATE LAST YEAR THAT THE IDEA OF NAMING ARBULU
VICE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN RAISED IN THE GOP'S INNER CIRCLE.)
WHATEVER ARBULU'S REAL AMBITIONS MAY BE -- AND HIS
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FIRIENDS INSISIT HE HAS NONE -- THE GENERAL APPEARS TO BE
LESS THAN ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE AMBASSADORIAL PROSPECT.

3. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A CERTAIN LOGIC IN SENDING ARBULU
TO SANTIAGO. HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ESTABLISHING THE
PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO MILITARY ESTABLISH-
MENTS THROUGH RECIPROCAL VISIT AND THE LIKE. HE

REGARDS HIMSELF AS A CLOSE FRIEND OF FORMER CHILEAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE BRADY AND IS APPARENTLY WELL ACQUAINTED WITH OTHER CHILEAN OFFICERS. ALTHOUGH NOT UNIVERSALLY POPULAR WITH PERUVIAN OFFICERS -- THE DAO REPORTED INSTANCES OF GUMBLING OVER PURPORTED FAVORITISM IN MAKING KEY ASSIGNMENTS -- ARBULU WAS THE STRONG MAN OF THE ARMY DURING THE DECEMBER-FEBRUARY TRANSITION PERIOD. UNLIKE PREVIOUS PRIME MINISTERS (OR HIS SUCCESSOR), HE DEVOTED HIMSELF TO MILITARY BUSINESS, ASSERTING THAT HIS FIRST PRIORITY WAS ASSURING THE WELFARE OF THE ARMY, AND STAYED IN THE BACKGROUND ON POLITICAL ISSUES. HIS PERSONAL AUTHORITY WAS AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN ASSURING THAT MORALES BERMUDEZ IN FEBRUARY MADE IT SAFELY PAST ARMY RETIRMENT STILL IN THE PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR.

4. BUT HOW HE WILL FARE AS A DIPLOMAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN. ARBULU IS A MAN OF SIMPLE TASTES WHO DISLIKES SMALL TALK (SOME OF HIS FRIENDS CALL HIM "EL PARCO") AND LOOKS FORWARD WITH DISTASTE TO THE PROTOCOLARY ASPECTS OF HIS NEW JOB. HE IS REPORTEDLY EASY OF MANNER AND RELAXED WITH OLD FRIENDS AND ARMY CONTEMPORARIES; BUT HE APPEARS RATHER RETIRING AND ILL AT EASE IN OTHER SITUATIONS. ARBULU IS GENERALLY CLOSE-MOUTHED ON MATTERS OF SUBSTANCE, BUT CAN BE QUITE DIRECT AND EVEN BRUSQUE ON OCCASION. OVERALL, HE STRIKES ME AS SHRED -- A PROBLEM -- SOLVER IN LINE WITH HIS ENGINEERING BACKGROUND --
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BUT RATHER NARROW OUTLOOK AND EXPERIENCE -- AND PERHAPS A BIT UNSOPHISTICATED FOR DEALING WITH THE CHILEAN CIVILIANS NOW COMING TO THE FORE IN SANTIAGO.

5. THE GENERAL SHARES THE INTENSE NATIONALISM AND DEVOTION TO THE ARMY COMMON TO HIS INSTITUTION. HE AT LEAST PROFFERS HOWEVER, TO REJECT REVANCHISM AND TO BELIEVE IN PEACEFUL RELATIONS BETWEEN CHILE AND PERU. BUT THIS COMMITMENT IS CLEARLY LIMITED BY DEEPLY-SEATED SUSPICIONS OF CHILEAN INTENTIONS. HE IS APT, FOR EXAMPLE, TO VIEW CHANGES IN THE CHILEAN HIGH COMMAND -- AS WITH BRADY'S RECENT DEMOTION -- AS SOMEHOW DIRECTED AT GETTING RID OF "PERU'S FRIENDS". ARBULU IS MARKEDLY UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT BOLIVIA'S ASPIRATIONS FOR ACCESS TO THE SEA. HE HAS REMARKED THAT "DANZIG CORRIDORS" DO NOT CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE.

6. IN TERMS OF THE PERUVIAN POLITICS OF THE LAST DECADE, ARBULU FALLS WITH HIS CLASSMATE MORALES BERMUDEZ SOMEWHERE NEAR THE MIDDLE. HE DEPRECATES PERU'S OLD ENTREPRENEURIAL AND LAND-OWNING CLASSES, AND HAS ADVOCATED A STRONG ROLE FOR THE STATE -- AND THE MILITARY -- IN

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY. BUT HIS RELATIONS WITH GENERAL(R) FERNANDEZ MALDONADO AND THE OTHER ARMY LEFTISTS HAVE BEEN POOR FOR SOME YEARS. ARBULU GIVES NO EVIDENCE OF THE BITTER ANTI-COMMUNISM COMMON TO HIS CHILEAN COUNTERPARTS. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE UNITED STATES IS NO MORE THAN CAUTIOUSLY FRIENDLY. HE LIKES TO VISIT OUR COUNTRY AND ADMIRES OUR TECHNOLOGY; BUT HE RESENTS OUR FAILURE TO SUPPLY MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO PERU AND IS INCLINED TO QUESTION OUR MOTIVES.

7. ARBULU IS BLESSED WITH A CHARMING AND VIVACIOUS WIFE WHO IS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY ON HER FATHER'S SIDE. HE SMOKES CIGARS, OF WHICH THE FORMER CUBAN AMBASSADOR, CONFIDENTIAL

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ANTONIO NUNEZ, USED TO KEEP HIM IN GOOD SUPPLY. I AM TOLD THAT TACHO SOMOZA IS HIS NEWEST SOURCE, PROVIDING NICARAGUA'S BEST IN SPECIAL BOXES EMBOSSED WITH ARBULU'S NAME.

8. THIS CABLE IS BASED ON MY TALKS WITH THE GENERAL AND WITH A LOCAL BUSINESSMAN WHO HAS BEEN HIS INTIMATE FRIEND FOR MANY YEARS. SHLAUDEMAM

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